



Doing
the
Most
Good

The Salvation Army-Family Intervention Services The Independent Living Skills Program



NA HO`OLA PONO

“Moving Towards a Life of Righteousness”

ILSP Hapuna Beach Activity

On January 19, 2009, the Independent Living Skills Program had a beach activity for our participants at Hapuna Beach. It was an awesome activity to mark the beginning of a new year. This activity was also an incentive for all the ILSP participants that took part in volunteering for the program's community service projects. One of the community service projects our youth participated in was preparing some of the tasks required to make feeding the less fortunate people & families at a sponsored

Salvation Army Luncheon in November. The activity was being offered also to those that participated in the Christmas Toys 4 Tots Gift-Wrapping activity (see January issue). It was an early start for the day as the ILSP staff started picking up ILSP participants from 7 am in the morning at Pahoa high school, Kea`au Shipman Park and the ILP office. We left Hilo at 8 am in the morning with the first stop on our journey being KTA Super Store in Kamuela where the lunches and drinks were picked up. Once we arrived at Hapuna Beach Park we were lucky to capture the big pavilion. Even though the water



Our fearless ILP Leader,
Uncle Warren & Friends

was alluring for all those that attended, we had them participate in several activities before we ate lunch and gave them free time to swim. We did an activity that we called, "What If?" that the youth had a lot of laughs with. And they each filled out a questionnaire asking them questions relating to their experiences in foster care. The whole day was filled with fun and laughter and the activity brought all our ILSP participants closer together, which equates to greater support for one another towards securing a greater future & success.

SPECIAL EDITION

The Salvation Army-Family Intervention Services
and
Independent Living Program

2nd Quarterly issue

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Mission Statement

"To provide youth with skills for a healthy life and to instill purpose, hope and vision to youth and their families."



The Salvation Army-Family Intervention Services
and
Independent Living Program

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Work before Play and get to
know one another better.

FAFSA Workshop

On January 5, 2009, we conducted a workshop for most of our seniors with aspirations of attending college, to apply and complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at Hawaii Community College. Due to our ever strengthening part-

nership with Hawaii Community College & the University of Hawaii at Hilo, classroom facilities and online access to over 25 computers were made available to the youth that attended. This activity was not only vital to our youth that were (page 6 College)



Our participants either
focusing on their FAFSA
or counting their money.



Growing Up Isn't Easy: Especially in Foster care

Growing up isn't easy when you don't have your mom and dad, but try growing up with neither. You know when you're in elementary school and your teacher tells you all the signs that would warn you of people taking drugs, well my parents didn't show any of those signs. Without the guidance of my parents, I did poorly in school and thought that that would get someone's attention. I learned the hard way that the bad grades I received got me only negative attention instead of the positive attention that I had longed for. I overcame many of the obstacles that were thrown at me and that college would be my next major challenge. Higher education means a higher paying job and a good education will only create greater opportunities for me, which is what I'll need to support myself and family.

I was ten years old when I was taken away from my parents by Child Welfare Services (CWS). I was placed with my dad's sister and family. She always treated me differently. I guess because I wasn't her biological child. I hated living with her, because everything was so unfair. I had to do most of the chores and was never rewarded like her biological children who did almost nothing. When I entered high school I wasn't allowed to go to any afterschool activities or sport games. I remember during the summer of my freshman year, I wasn't allowed to attend my cousin's wedding because I had answered the phone after 9 'o clock at night. The worst part is that the phone call wasn't even for me, but for my auntie. The worst thing was when she told the police that I was a liar when I told her that her son was molesting me. I was taken away by CWS and once again was bounced through seven different foster homes during my

sophomore year.

My dad's sister worked as a housekeeper. The pay isn't that bad considering the work that she did, but I always knew that I didn't want to live my life cleaning up after other people. She said I wouldn't go to college because of my poor grades and expected me to work for her when I graduated from high school, like her nieces and daughters. I'm tired of people telling me what I can't do and not believing in me. I also don't want to go through life living paycheck to paycheck. I then became committed towards establishing positive changes for myself and future.

It's always hard to stay on track and to stay motivated when there is so much negativity that surrounds me. I have no time for errors in my pursuit towards the educational and career goals I have set for myself. The



price of living and supporting a family is more expensive than ever before, so I know I need to work hard to make it in life. I try my hardest on all my assignments at school because my future successes begins with earning my high school diploma and working to achieve my dreams.

I want to go to college and major in Early Childhood Education and one day open a daycare center for teen parents who choose to stay in school. Education is important to me and I disagree with those who think that having a child at a young age should

hold you back from pursuing their dreams. I know from first hand experience the struggles of being a young mother and a teenager in high school and what it takes to be successful in both areas. I know how hard it is to juggle the demands of a newborn baby, school and trying to maintain a healthy lifestyle. It's not easy and sometimes I feel like I want to give up, but I know that if I do, I'll not only fail myself, but more importantly, I will fail at being a good parent to my daughter. I never want my daughter to feel the way I felt when I was forced to move from home to home due to being in the foster care system and lack of stability.

My daughter is two months old and with the price of everything going up, it is difficult to live with a small income. I know what it's like to not have money and wish you had all the cool things that the other kids in school possess. I don't want my daughter to feel that she is less worthy than anyone else because of financial differences. I will be successful Academically, Financially, Emotionally and Spiritually.



This is not a story of despair, but more a tale of overcoming great challenges that many of the youth we work for can relate to. I applaud this young woman for her willingness to go beyond the negative experiences that had impacted her life. Our desires in our program is to see our youth succeed in life, but that will not happen unless these young people truly embrace who they really are.

Foster Youth Speaks Out



On January 19, 2009, we held an ILSP activity at Hapuna Beach. One of the activities we did with the youth that attended was having them fill out a questionnaire about their experiences and feelings about being in foster care.

Here are some of the questions and some of their responses.

How do you feel about being a foster youth? **A.A. from Hilo:** "I feel good because I feel a lot better about myself."

K.K. from Hilo: "I feel safer."

P.A. from Pahoa: "If I wasn't in foster care, I would always be in trouble."

A.L. from Kea`au: "Well, it's kind of sad because you're not with your family, but on the bright side, there are other families who would give you everything that some of your parents should have."

T.S. from Hilo: "I am mad and happy at the same time."

B.C. from Kea`au: "Sometimes it's good and sometimes I hate it."

Name one or more accomplishments since being placed in foster care:

A.A. from Hilo: "I got on the Honor Roll and brought up my grades in school."

P.A. from Pahoa: "I got my grades up to "A"s and "B"s".

A.L. from Kea`au: "Well I don't smoke anymore, I don't drink and I don't dress like a slut. I go to church now

and I don't

swear. I have good grades and I have more friends."

B.C. from Kea`au: "I got my first summer job. I earned my certification for CPR and First Aid. I've also learned to stop running away from my problems."

E.S. from Hilo: "I bodyboard more and play football in school."

R.T. from Kea`au: "I've learned a lot along the way. I've become a stronger and more independent person, both physically and mentally."

One difficult thing about being a foster youth and what am I doing to make this challenge better?

Majority of the youth that answered the questionnaire stated that the most difficult thing was being taken away from their families and getting along with their new families.

P.A. from Pahoa: "One difficulty is how everyone judges us in the wrong way once they find out we are in foster care. I just ignore them, but it hurts."

V.A. from Kea`au: "What's difficult for me is not being able to communicate with adults like my social workers, foster parents and programs. I am trying to communicate better and be more confident."

If you could do one thing that would make the foster youth experience easier or better, that would be:

M.S. from

Kea`au: "Being placed in a foster home that you like and feel like you belong."

B.C. from Kea`au: "Give foster youth food stamps."

P.A. from Pahoa: "Offering us more things to do and being able to see family more often."

Why do you think support is important to you.

V.R. from Kea`au: To help us make good choices."

R.T. from Kea`au: "It would be harder for us to just give up when you know someone cares and supports you."

T.S. from Kea`au: "Having support from people you trust is important because without their support I wouldn't be able to survive in this cruel world."

If there is one good thing, one good advise, anything that you could say to help another foster youth endure the challenges that being a foster youth presents to young people, what would this advise be?

R.T. from Kea`au: "To never give up no matter how tough the situation is. Always look for positive things and realize that there's other people who has it a whole lot worst, so be grateful with what you've got."

E.S. from Hilo: "Live life to the fullest, don't be afraid to try new things."

P.A. from Pahoa: "We fall down sometimes. Just remember to get back up."

K.K. from Kea`au: "Keep your mind more on the positives than the negatives."

V. R. from Kea`au: "If you have a dream, set a goal for yourself and soar for it."

A.A. from Hilo: "No scare dem, Go get dem."

True words of wisdom from the youth of ILP.



Checking Out Student Housing

Recognizing that one of the plights that our youth in foster care are confronted with when exiting the system are housing concerns. With that in mind, on February 25, 2009, the ILP program had scheduled a tour of the University of Hawaii at Hilo Student Housing Program. Over the past six years, the ILP program in Hilo has developed a strong partnership with UH Hilo and the Student Housing Program.

ILP youth who were interested in student housing attended this valuable activity. We all gathered at Kanilehua dorm where Kelly Crowe and other student housing staff met our youth to enlighten us on the benefits of living in the dorms while

earning their college degrees. They explained the protocols of applying for student housing needs, stressed the importance of meeting all housing timelines and even discussed the employment opportunities that the student housing offered those living in residence. The staff then took our ILP youth on a walk through all the dorms they had available for incoming freshmen. The youth got to walk through Kanilehua, Hale Kehau and Kauanoie dorms. They



Our ILP participants eagerly listening to the UH Hilo Housing staff on the benefits of living in the student dorms on campus.

got to walk through several of the dorm rooms to see each rooms' living space and it's set up, especially with having to share dorm space. They laughed when one of the staff had to approach a student in the dorm that had their music blaring. The housing tour also offered weekend activities such as Whale Watches and Nautilus Submarine rides. We even toured the Hale Kehau cafeteria. Many of the ILP students

got valuable information and looking seriously at applying for dorm placement. Good Luck!!!

Learning How to Save Lives: First Aid & CPR

On March 25, 2009, during the Spring Break, while the majority of high school students were either sleeping in late or planning a day at the beach, some of our youth that participates in the ILP program, gave up a day to learn life saving skills.

Every Spring Break for the past three years, the ILP program has been fortunate to have members from the Palekana Kai (Guardians of the Ocean), an ocean safety and water awareness program, have been instrumental in teaching our youth that participates in the ILP CPR and First Aid.

This year's CPR and First Aid certification workshop was conducted at the Queen's Lili'uokalani Children's Center.



ILP's version of Get Down

The QLCC's site was made through the generous sponsorship of Willie Kalei, a former employee of The Salvation Army-Family Intervention Services.

Our youth woke up early that morning as transportation pickups started from 7:30 a.m. The workshop started sharply at 9 in the morning.

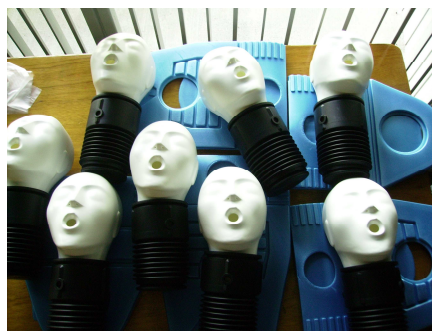
The morning session revolve around Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation or CPR. The youth learned through watching videos explaining step by step each skill. Then the youth had to practice each skill on mannequins provided by the trainers. While the students practiced the skills, the trainers told them to think of someone important in their lives while performing CPR on the man-

nequins, which made them truly realize the value of what they were learning and practicing. After practicing all the CPR skills, all the participants had to take a written exam before they could be certified for CPR.



Uncle Warren and Uncle Glenn showing the group how to wrap up a wound

After lunch, the youth started into their First Aid training. Like the CPR, they watched and learned through the videos showing step by step each skill. Uncle Harlan and Uncle Glenn also shared a lot of stories and examples of burn victims and how their training had helped others. After watching the videos, the youth had to practice first aid on each other and it was fun watching them bandage one another. It looked like a war zone with all these youth bandaged up. After practicing the skills, they all had to take the written test. Everyone but one student passed, but



Good News! All our victims have survived

that youth had another year of high school and was determined to pass the training next year.



Ready to save some lives

Not only did the youth learn valuable life-saving skills, but being certified makes them more employable and heightens their self esteem and increases their confidence level.

I'd like to send a big mahalo to Uncle Harlan, Uncle Glenn and Auntie Mary for their time and patience. Mahalo!



Mahalo to our Life Saving instructors

Remember the 3 "C's"

When you come across an accident scene where a victim is involved, follow these important steps.

Check:

To make sure that the scene is safe first before checking the victim or victims. If the scene isn't safe, you may become a victim too.

Call:

Make sure you designate someone to call 9-1-1 and not just yell out 9-1-1. Designating someone to call will insure that someone calls as soon as possible. Also have someone to wait and direct emergency medical personnel.

Care:

If trained, provide care only as trained.

For more information, contact your local American Red Cross

Making Life Books

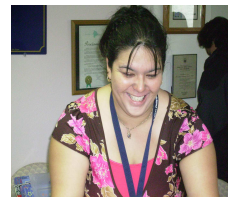
March 23, 2009 was the first day of Spring Break. While young people on their first day of Spring Break were sleeping in late, some of the youth we serve in our programs came in early instead to do a "Life Book" activity at the Friends of Children Justice Center.

This activity was being led by Beth Pelanca, who not only works at East Hawaii DHS-CWS, but she is also a former foster youth who oftentimes uses opportunities like this to inspire foster youth. Most of the materials and foods used for this awesome activity, were donated by Epic Ohana Conferencing and The Salvation Army-Family Intervention Services. Most of the participants had that look of uncertainty when they first attended. Some of the youth that attended knew that they would be creating a scrapbook based on their lives, but as the day



progressed, they all really got into the project. Some of the youth that participated commented that it was good to meet with other foster youth and talk story as they all worked together. The majority of our youth, I'm sure still harbors the bad experiences and factors that caused them to be removed from their homes, yet for this activity, their thoughts revolved only on their positive reflections and positive people that currently were in their lives. Their primary focus for the day was to personalize their Life Book to reflect who they are. Some youth chose albums that were sport related. Some chose albums that had cultural themes with images associated with Hawaiian lifestyles.

One youth commented, "One thing that is important about doing the Life Book activity is that you get the chance to include all of your life experiences and memo-



Mahalo Auntie Beth

ries in a book and creating something that will be cherished forever." Another youth said, "I'll keep updating my Life Book and hopefully show my kids what I looked like before. It'll also include

all the things that mattered to me at a particular time." One youth stated, "It is important to have more activities like this for youth in foster care, because it gives the youth the opportunity to bond with others in similar situations and let them be themselves. And to me, that's the best thing." The majority of the youth that participated felt the same way and really got to know one another. One youth said, "Being in the system sometimes stops you right in your tracks, but when we have opportunities to relate to one another when no one else understand what we face everyday, helps us to move forward." True that and let's keep it going. Mahalo Auntie Beth.



Working hard having Fun

Ohana is Forever III

Spring Break usually means time for another "Ohana is Forever" conference. This conference was designed specifically for youth in foster care and foster parents, social workers, service agencies and everyone associated with the foster care system. This conference was the third Ohana is Forever conference and it was held at the Ala Moana hotel. Over 100 foster youth from all around the State of Hawaii attended this outstanding event. Some of the youth that attended from the Big Island started their day at four 'o clock in the morning to get ready to catch their early morning flight to O`ahu. For some, it was the first time flying on a plane and visiting Honolulu. After landing on O`ahu, all the youth and the social workers that attended the conference walked to the mauka end of the terminal and waited for the chartered buses to pick them up. From the airport, everyone was transported to the Ala Moana Hotel where the

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Ohana Is Forever
TIT conference

was being held. Once gathered together, everyone had to check in to register and all attendees were given name tags and carry bags containing conference information. As part of the conference, there were informational booths of services and programs available for foster youth and families, such as Epic Ohana and Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition. The conference's opening was started by a blessing and chant by Ms. Ipo Ma'e, a former foster youth. One of the speakers was retired Superior



At the Ohana Is Forever III conference, all the foster youth that attended had their own gathering for their Breakout sessions.

Court Judge Leonard Edwards, from Santa Clara, California, who gave an inspiring speech towards making youth in foster care a greater priority in the

judiciary, as well as legislative arena. He also praised all the work and accomplishments made by the Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition and their passing of last year's, "The Foster Youth Bill of Rights". Another inspiring speaker was Gloria Tum-baga, who is attending the John Burns School of Medicine who spoke of her experiences overcoming the challenges her siblings and herself endured throughout the foster care system. She is a true testament that success can happen, even if you were placed in foster care. The highlight of the youth's experience, was each other and the friendship developed.



Just some of the youth that attended from Hilo during one of the conference's breaks

conference breaks.

Foster youth supporting foster youth will be an asset towards developing greater and successful futures.

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Na Ho'ola Pono

**"Moving Towards a Life of
Righteousness"**

ILP Heroes Corner

Mahalo Nui Loa to the following :
Kelly Crowe & UHH Student Housing
Jackie Debus-Johnson UH Hilo Theater
Doodie Downs & Hawaii Community
College Financial Aid Office
Kaleo Pilago & Kipuka Program
Uncle Glenn & Uncle Harlan
Ellen Kusano UHH Campus Center
Uncle Willie & Queen Lili'uokalani
Children's Center
Hilo, Kea'au, Pahoa and Waiakea High
Schools for their ILP Support
East Hawaii Dept. of Human Services
Child Welfare Services
**With Your Support, Our Youth has a
Chance Towards a Greater Future & Life**

Doing the College Walk

On March 18, 2009, a cold, stormy and rainy day, we conducted a walking tour at the University of Hawaii at Hilo campus. It was so cold, yet the ILP youth that attended this activity, validated their seriousness towards securing college by their attendance. Anyway, like the song says, "Hilo such a rainy old town" and a lot of rain we did see.

As the tour went on, the youth forgot about the rain as they all warmed up to what UH Hilo had to offer. We started our tour from the Campus Center and visited the Student Government Office and meet the university's student body

president who offered inspiring words of encouragement and setting college goals. We then made a stop at the Health Room where they got some information on the services they provide students. The youth saw the campus publication, Ke Kalaheia, but our ILP newsletter was better (no commercial ads). They then walked over to Student Services where they visited the Admission & Financial Aid offices. In that offices, were also Counseling and Advising Offices. There was also a stu-



One of our stops on the UH Hilo tour was the Campus Center & Lava Landing

dent that graduated from our ILP program several years ago that spoke to our youth, who stated that she wouldn't be here without being in the ILP program. When the students heard that she was graduating this semester, they all applauded feeling that there's hope for them as well. We walked and went into some of the classrooms at Edith Kana'ole Hall (EKH). These classrooms not

only served UH Hilo students, but Hawaii Community College students too. The classes being taught at EKH, ranged from Hawaiian Studies, Geography, Anthropology and History. They visited the Mo'okini Library and was blown away by the Hawaii Interactive Television

System (HITS), where a class could be beamed from different islands and they could see and communicate with each other from UH Hilo. The tour ended at UHH Theater of Arts, where Jackie Debus-Johnson & students displayed their drama skills and allowed us to sit in on their rehearsal. That was the highlight of the tour. In high school, drama's a bad thing. In the theater, drama is good. Our youth benefitted a lot from this awesome event and reinforced their goals towards college.

College



interested in securing valuable financial aid resources, but the college also felt it benefitted them as well to have students applying this early in the year. The college even provided additional staff from the Hawaii Community College's Financial Aid Office. Over the years, both Hawaii Community College and the University of Hawaii at Hilo has been gracious in meeting the needs of youth in our ILP program and providing vital information to assist our youth that were interested in securing higher education as their post-high option.

Besides giving the youth that participates in our programs the opportunity to complete their FAFSA application early and insuring their requested

financial aid assistance to be awarded early, it also gave our youth the opportunity to see other youth in foster care pursuing the same post-high option as themselves. These are the same students that will be seeing and supporting each other towards greater college successes.

Another positive reason in completing the FAFSA application early is that it would qualify our youth for an SEOG grant. It's like a reward for completing the FAFSA early. They have a special pot of monies that are awarded for submitting their application in a timely manner, but once those funds are used up, only financial aid monies that are offered to the general student population are

awarded. For those that completed and submitted their FAFSA application that day will be eligible

for that extra SEOG grant. And I know our youth could use the extra financial assistance. This was the first time we've done a FAFSA workshop, but with the ever increasing number of youth choosing college as their post-high options, this activity will definitely not be the last. A good luck shout out for all of our participants. Show Me the Money !!!!



College staff providing valuable instructions in completing the FAFSA.